

**MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Virtual Meeting Via GoToMeeting**

**MAC Members Present:** D. Swygert, P. Keener, J. Massey, M.P. Adams, J. Cribb, C. Woods (virtual)

**MAC Members Absent:** None

**DNR Staff Present:** B. Keppler, T. Darden, T. Snoots, J. Binz, P. Kingsley-Smith, E. Gooding, M. Walker, E. Weeks, A. Watson, M. Henderson, Director Boyles, M. Ingle

**Guests:** Chaplain Jeff Shealy, Scott Whittaker, CCA

**1. Call Meeting to Order – Chairman Swygert:**

Chairman Swygert called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

**2. Housekeeping- J. Binz:**

Julie reviewed the processes in place for the Virtual Meeting

**3. Invocation- Pastor Jeff Shealy:**

Pastor Shealy led the Invocation for the meeting.

**4. Pledge of Allegiance:**

J. Massey led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**5. Approval of Minutes: Chairman Swygert:**

Chairman Swygert asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes (October 2022). J. Massey made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. M.P. Adams 2nd. Motion carried unanimously.

**6. Public Comment – Chairman Swygert:**

Chairman Swygert thanked the Committee for their commitment to the MAC and welcomed Scott Whittaker from CCA to the meeting.

**7. Reports:**

**A. Fisheries Dependent Data Collection and Use -E. Gooding**

Elizabeth's report delved into the specific uses of Fisheries Dependent data. How it is collected, used, and reported. Data collected is both commercial and recreational landings. Some of the data is mandatory in the S.C. code of laws and some is Federally required reporting. The introduction of electronic reporting yields more accurate reporting.

She noted that both the recreational and commercial data collections are integral in fisheries management decisions through tools such as stock assessments at the State, Interstate and Federal levels.

The Fisheries Dependent Data Collection program is housed under the Fisheries Statistics section of the Office of Fisheries Management at MRD.

**B. Environmental DNA and Applications to Cobia in South Carolina – M. Walker:**

Matt reviewed new eDNA techniques utilizing an automated eDNA sampler that is much more time efficient than previous collection tools.

He walked the Committee through how they develop the eDNA tools in the lab to target species with synthetic DNA and then running experiments in MRD's wet lab in tanks and finally (and most difficult) into the field.

He focused specifically on Cobia. Cobia have been in decline due to pressure on the fishery and noted that it is a data poor species that historically relied on fishing tournaments to gather data.

They have designed a field sampling model at three sites in the Broad River during high tides and moon cycles with ten samples per site. These sites will hopefully garner data which will assist in rebuilding Cobia stock.

Chairman Swygert asked if Cobia is rebounding since the new regulations were put in place. Dr. Darden said it was too early in the rebuilding of the stock as there are still many unknowns about the fishery.

Scott Whittaker commended DNR on their research of Cobia noting it is still just the tip of the spear in rebuilding the fishery.

**8. Deputy Director Comments – B. Keppler:**

Deputy Director Keppler's comments included the following points:

- Welcomed new MAC member J.R. McCroskey
- Thanked the Committee for their efforts and recommendations on the Blue Crab Report which has been submitted to the General Assembly
- Reported on the MRD Conference held in December
- Updated FY2024 Budget Requests: Staff retention and recruitment; Replacement of expiring federal funding for fisheries data collection and for

replacement of previously lost appropriated  
funding; Infrastructure; Aging small boat  
replacement

Director Boyles thanked the MAC for their continued support and  
service to the Committee and the Agency as a whole.

**9. Date, Place & Time of Next Meeting – Chairman Swygert:**

The next scheduled meeting of the Marine Advisory Committee is Friday  
April 28th @ 10:00.

**10. Adjourn – Chairman Swygert:**

Chairman Swygert adjourned the meeting at 11:15 am.